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WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 16, 2019

Berry family gift supports honors students

An influential Dayton family with a long history of community philanthropy is continuing their legacy of generosity with a \$5 million commitment to fund scholarships for students in the University of Dayton's Honors Program.

The multimillion-dollar gift from John Jr., Shirley and Charles "Chuck" Berry will establish the Berry Family Scholarship to support Honors Program students, with preference given to students from Ohio and the Midwest.

"As the University of Dayton continues to elevate our recruitment of the most talented, creative and academically well prepared students, the Berry Family Scholarship will transform our capacity to make a UD education financially accessible to our honors students," said Paul Benson, provost and executive vice president of academic affairs. "The Berry family recognizes that, through the support of the Honors Program, these students have a profound impact on the scholarly and creative culture of our campus."

An additional \$250,000 from the Berry Family Foundation will provide operating support for the Berry Summer Thesis Institute, an existing summer program long supported by the Berrys that introduces students to scholarly research opportunities.

"These students are just committed," John Berry Jr. said. "Every time I meet with them it provides an attitude boost and reminds me what the University of Dayton stands for."

The three donors are the sons and daughter-in-law of John W. Berry Sr., the late CEO of Dayton-based L.M. Berry & Company. John Sr. was the son of Loren M. Berry, who began mass production and publication of the Yellow Pages throughout the Midwest and beyond when he launched his company in Dayton in 1910.

With their most recent gift, the Berry family has given \$18 million to UD, a legacy of philanthropy that spans four decades. In 1980, Loren M. Berry left \$1 million to the School of Law. John W. Berry Sr. gave \$7.5 million in 1996 to endow an Honors Program scholarship fund, offer experiential learning and research opportunities for honors students, and provide financial support for students completing an honors thesis project.

“He wanted to help raise the bar at the University of Dayton by giving the University the means to attract all types of students who were high achievers,” John Berry Jr. said of his father’s transformational gift to the Honors Program. “It’s very moving to hear the students talk about what the scholarship has meant to them and their enthusiasm about their research.”

John Berry Jr. said he and his family chose to make another large gift now to provide more momentum toward the University’s efforts to make a UD education more accessible to all qualified students.

“The University of Dayton has been a great contributor to the city and we felt it was a good time to give back,” he said. “You like to see the results of your gift as opposed to making a gift when you’re not around anymore.”

John Berry Jr. said that was the case with his father, who died shortly after making the \$7.5 million contribution. Thanks to that gift, Berry scholarships have helped nearly 300 honors students earn UD diplomas, and are assisting more than 1,400 students currently pursuing honors diplomas. The Berry Summer Thesis Institute Fund, launched with a \$300,000 gift in 2012, has helped 53 undergraduate students complete thesis work to prepare them for future academic careers.

In addition to the \$18 million in gifts to UD, the Berry family has given generously to education, health care and the arts in Dayton and throughout the United States. At UD, Berry family contributions have also supported the law school,

athletics, the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

While none of the Berry family members graduated from UD, Shirley Berry completed coursework toward a graduate degree in educational leadership from 1994 to 1997 and Chuck Berry has taken classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

“We are immensely grateful to the Berry family, not only for this wonderful gift, but for their extraordinary ongoing support that has helped and continues to help UD students fulfill their dreams,” said University of Dayton President Eric F. Spina. “Their scholarships have attracted talented students who enrich the campus experience for all and help launch students into distinguished academic and professional careers.”

For more information or interviews, contact Shannon Miller, associate director of news and communications, at smiller6@udayton.edu or 937-229-3258.

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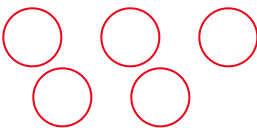
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